



Edwards-Herr House, one of our permanently preserved properties



RIVER FIELDS

2018 Annual Newsletter

What were you doing in 1959? Were you born? Had your parents met? Maybe you were in your first job? I was in first grade enjoying learning to read! Please take a moment to think about what 1959 means to you. Why is 1959 important? Because that was the year that River Fields was founded by Archibald Cochran and a host of other major community leaders. Imagine the vision that these citizens had to foresee the importance of such a unique and vital organization!

2019 is right around the corner and is River Fields 60th anniversary! We are planning celebrations, have a good strategic plan to guide us, and look forward to another active and effective year. We hope you know there is a long line of trustees, donors, members, landowners, citizens and leaders who over these six decades have kept this important organization active and growing. Thank you for your role in being part of the River Fields crew!

1959 is also important to one of River Fields most significant recent projects- the Merriwether House. Although this very important historic African American icon was built in 1901, a dramatic event related to the house occurred in 1959 with the expected arrival of Harry Hall Merriwether's first great-granddaughter, Suzanne. Suzanne's grandmother, Elnora Merriwether, decided that half of the wrap-around porch on their home would be enclosed to add rooms for the growing family. (Elnora was the first African American librarian at the first public library for African Americans in the South funded by Andrew Carnegie, now called the Chestnut Street Library).

Now 59 years later, the non-historic rooms were removed and that porch was fully rebuilt and restored. The lost and deteriorated Steamboat Gothic details were perfectly copied and replaced and the porch floor and roof restored. As many of you have noticed, the house now has its full wrap-around porch in place for the first time in sixty years! It is truly a beauty and now really evokes its historic era and design-A Steamboat Gothic house. Other work has been done recently including replacing the roofing material and beginning the interior demolition to bring the house up to 2019 needs. Watch for big news on this soon.



Fully restored porch on the Merriwether House

There is lots of other news in this newsletter. Enjoy the photo in the masthead of the article on page two about the wonderful new Ohio River property acquisition and the news on page four about the fascinating and very historic Edwards Herr House which was built a year before Locust Grove! As ever, please feel free to contact us for more information or if you have suggestions.

We are grateful for the support of each of you! Please contribute again today. Your support is essential for the coming decades!

Therese Sweets Rungger

Executive Director



- Sound Finances
- Ethical Conduct
- Responsible Governance
- Lasting Stewardship

Land Conservation Updates

New Property and Unique Scenic View Opportunity for the Public!

Since the last newsletter, River Fields has conserved its thirteenth property that will provide a spectacular scenic view of the river and the Louisville skyline for generations to come. We accepted the generous donation of property which has 259 feet along the River Road Scenic Byway and the same amount of Ohio River shoreline. It includes historic docks that were once the Fairview Boat Docks. The reason those docks were called Fairview is because there is a "fair", i.e., beautiful "view" of the Louisville skyline. River Fields calls this property internally by its historic and perfectly chosen name, "Fairview."



Downstream view of Indiana from new "Fairview" property

The land includes a wide gravel area where hypothetically cars or bicycles can pull off River Road to enjoy the view of Louisville to the west and the river to the north. Unfortunately, the property has become significantly overgrown in recent years and is in great need of improvement. Our vision for the property is to create a unique and safe scenic pull off where the public can enjoy a peaceful and inspiring view of the Ohio River and the skyline of Louisville.

The Board is currently working on raising almost \$50,000 for the necessary work and maintenance so "Fairview" can be open to the public. We plan to remove all brush and invasive species on the property. We will remove the low limbs of the larger native trees to improve the public viewshed, while preserving the scenic beauty and shade that these trees may provide for years to come.

The decrepit and deteriorating remnants of old docks at the riverside on the Fairview property will be removed. The existing inappropriate fence will be fully removed and replaced with a guardrail or barrier that complements the property's place along the heart of the Metro Louisville's only State Designated Scenic Byway. We will also improve the parking area. Finally, we hope to add a bench and some signs to improve the visitor experience, including interpretive signs that tell some of the story of the Ohio River and its importance to our community. We have already completed preliminary cleanups to improve the safety and appearance of the property but there is much more work to be completed before the area can be enjoyed by the public.

We continue to work toward protecting additional properties and resources that will make meaningful contributions to the quality of life of our community. We have several exciting projects located across the region which we look forward to sharing with you in the coming months. Your support makes each one of our conservation successes possible!

Strategic Planning

The River Fields Board of Trustees recently adopted a comprehensive strategic plan to guide our progress through the year 2021. The Board designated a Committee consisting of four Trustees and the Executive Director to lead the strategic planning process, and consultant Ben Miles helped facilitate and write the Plan itself. The process involved several Board retreats and the Plan built on many assessment and planning efforts River Fields has completed in recent years. The many goals and deadlines of the adopted Plan represent a very ambitious vision for the next three years, but we're off to a good start and are excited about the future achievements this Plan will help us accomplish.

2019 is River Fields Sixtieth Anniversary; we are confident that our partnerships, people, and plans will lead to us to continue to achieve our mission and make positive impacts in our community, while growing and improving our organization so that we are strong and vibrant for the next sixty years.

2018 Educational Events on National Register Properties Preserved Forever

This spring our popular Wildflower Walk at Wolf Pen Branch Mill Farm was held on a beautiful April Sunday. Guests enjoyed seeing the restored mill at work grinding corn and learned from the resident millwright about the grinding process and historic machinery. The diverse group of River Fields supporters were treated to an array of wildflowers identified by our biologist guide on this exclusive visit to this inspiring property. The intact historic cultural landscape and the regionally significant biological resources of the woods were preserved in 1999 through a conservation easement donated by Sallie Bingham and co-held by River Fields and the Kentucky Heritage Council.



Biologist Gary Libby with two of our young Wildflower Walk guests



In June, this year's annual tour of Edyalmoor, the last remaining segment of the Bate Plantation took place on a gorgeous day. In 1790, the Bate Plantation was originally 4,500 acres and was at that time the largest single land holding in Jefferson County. In November 2006, Kenneth W. and Edythe Moore preserved the historic home and picturesque grounds of the Edyalmoor property forever when they executed a Historic Preservation, Conservation and Scenic Easement, held jointly by River Fields, Inc. and the Kentucky Heritage Council.

View of Edyalmoor



River Fields Receives Award From Preservation Kentucky

On behalf of River Fields, Meme Sweets Runyon accepted the 2018 Ann Early Sutherland Excellence in Preservation Sustainability Award from Preservation Kentucky on Saturday, October 27th. This award is given to organizations that have made a strong connection between the preservation of historic places and environmental concerns, and understand the relationship between the preservation of our built environment and our natural environment. River Fields was honored because of our land conservation, advocacy, education and community programs for sustainability. To learn more about our very effective partner, Preservation Kentucky, check out preservationkentucky.org.

Richard Taylor, Ph.D., Preservation Kentucky (PK) Trustee, and Grady Walter, PK President, with Meme Runyon

River Fields Participates in City-Wide Mayor's Give-A-Day Week of Service



Volunteers in a spring snow storm

On Monday, April 16th, River Fields hosted a volunteer clean-up day to clear flood debris from Garvin Brown Preserve. Participating in the city-wide Mayor's Give-A-Day of Service Week allowed us to reach more potential volunteers through Metro United Way's volunteer portal. Despite snow and freezing weather, we had a total of 14 volunteers. Armed with gloves and trash bags, our volunteers cleared half a dumpster's worth of debris, including plenty of plastic bottles and Styrofoam. We even recovered a few tires and pieces of furniture deposited by the winter flood! It is great to have faithful River Fields' members working alongside new volunteers and so worthwhile to see what a tangible difference we were making in clearing debris from this publicly enjoyed spot on the river!



Some of the trash we cleared

Village Anchor Celebrity Host Night

On July 29th, we hosted our first Celebrity Host Night at The Village Anchor where we were able to share information about River Fields with over 90 new contacts. We had some great raffle items and guests enjoyed delicious food, while supporting River Fields. It was a beautiful evening and we are so appreciative of the support of The Village Anchor of local non-profits!

Trustee Von Purdy, volunteer Louise Gardner and Development Consultant Vanessa Castle



River Fields ED Meme Sweets Runyon with some of our supporters

2018 A Celebration in the Country

River Fields was pleased to honor Trustee Robert W. Griffith at our annual fundraising event this year, held on Friday, September 14 at Gingerwoods. Bob's leadership as legal counsel for two decades and now Trustee, has been invaluable to us and we were thrilled to celebrate his accomplishments, as well as to give him a "Legislative Citation" from the Ky Legislative Research Commission. Guests experienced a beautiful evening supporting River Fields while bidding on awesome auction items, listening to local entertainer Carly Johnson and enjoying local cuisine from Lilly's.



Shaun Duncan, Trustees Hunter Louis and Von Purdy, Blair Louis



Board President Logan Ormerod presenting the "Legislative Citation" to Bob Griffith

Next year's celebration will mark River Fields' 60th Anniversary so stay tuned for details!

Edwards-Herr House Educational Event



Members enjoyed the first tour of the grounds on a beautiful autumn day

This fall, we were very pleased to host our first tour of a historic residential property that has been protected by a River Fields conservation and preservation easement since 2004. The Edwards-Herr House, built in 1790 is possibly the oldest brick residence in Jefferson County. It was built as part of an original land grant to a soldier from the French & Indian War. Over the years, portions of the original estate were sold and developed into subdivisions, but this house and over ten acres remained intact. In 2004, landowner

Edith Henchey donated a historic preservation and conservation easement for the property to River Fields and the Kentucky Heritage Council in order to preserve the important history and of this place.

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You Make a Difference!

Please consider a monthly recurring gift that is automatically deducted -- this process is painless and really makes a difference for our project planning purposes!! You can do this by visiting <http://riverfields.org/donate> and choosing "Show my support by making this a recurring donation."

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